697. f. 29

THE SAINTS Imperfection.

OR

A Sermon wherein is made apparent,

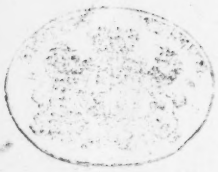
1. *That in Christian Religion, there may be a true pretence, with a reall intention, without sufficient intention, or attendance therein.*
2. *That neither Covenant nor Promise, &c. are sufficient in the way of salvation, without a methodicall, continuall, and profitable proceeding therein.*
3. *That knowing Christians are to be taught the first principles of Religion.*
4. *That it is a beleevers duty to advantage his spirituall estate, by a right and profitable Progresse therein.*
5. *That neither priviledge, nor large capacity, seconded with saving grace, can exempt the elect from a losse in spirituall affairs, except heed and paines be taken therein.*
9. *That neither Nobility, nor honour, knowledge, nor vertue, may detaine a Minister from telling a people of their sad and dangerous condition.*

Whereunto is added an Vse of direction, or information unto all Hearers.

By *Jo. Brookbank*, Minister of Gods Word.

1 *Cor.* 3. 2. I have fed you with Milk, & not with meat.
1 *Pet.* 2. 2. As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.
Heb 1. 2. 1. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

London, Printed for *W. L.* at *Pauls-Chain*, 1656.



To the Christian Reader.

CHristian Reader, since the turmoyles of these present times, it was my hap in one of the tempests thereof, to meete with one of our Novellists, *whose tongues are better furnished with the words of Scripture, then their heads with the understanding thereof: him I found, (as it is the property of all Sectaries) to carry a greater sound then substance of true Religion, which doth certainely conclude, that their spirituall building is not onely upon a sandy foundation, but without frame or fabrick: experience whereof I found in him, with whom I then met, who was altogether ignorant, what is meant by these termes* Principles of Religion; *which weakenes I much lamented, not only in him alone, but generally in most part of Christians: (which out of my well-wishes, for the good of Gods people) constrained me (though the unworthiest of Christs Ministers) to contrive somewhat, advantagious to Gods Church, in directing and advising weake and ignorant Christians*, how to learne a sure and safe method, profitable for the laying down of a firme and certain foundation of saving knowledge, and that those who will be pleased to make use thereof, may know how to make the spirituall building of their soules, permanent and eternall: *for this purpose I made choise of this Text,*

To the Reader.

(whence I have raiſed this Diſcourſe,) in the pondering whereof, this piece firſt præſented it ſelfe unto my meditation, which now for thy benefit, I præſent unto thee, as a præparation to that my purpoſe which if thou wilt be pleaſed to entertaine curteouſly, I ſhall (God willing) in due time præſent thee with my firſt intention, however according to my abilities, I am ever

Thine in Chriſt Jeſus;

Jo: Brookesbanke.

THE

THE SAINTS Imperfection.

HEBR. 5. 12.

Ye have need that one teach you againe, which be the first principles of the Oracles of God.

THis whole verse is an Apostolicall reproofe, wherein the Hebrewes are checked, both for a non-proficiency, and a losse in Christianity: and it doth consist of three Generalls. *Objurgatio Apostolica. Bez.*

1. Their Negligence. *For when for the time yee ought to be teachers.*

2. Their Ignorance. *Ye have neede that one teach you againe.*

3. Their Losse, and weakenes. *And are become such as stand in neede of milke, and not of strong meat.*

Which considered in such a people (as these *Doct.* 1.

converted Jewes) discovers unto us this truth;

Doct. 1. that, *A people may be truly religious, and yet so far deficient therein, that though the high Priest, and Bishop of our Soules, (Christ Jesus) be therein truly prætended, and really intended, yet he may be therein too slightly attended:* for they were dull of hearing, *v.* 11. having too remissely spent their time, and were both weake and ignorant, in their profession.

Reasons. *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you againe, which bee the first principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as stand in need of milke, and not of strong meate.*

My text is the midle or second part of the verse, *viz.* their Ignorance; *Ye have need that one teach you againe, which be the first principles of the oracles of God*: which like unto a booke opens it selfe, into two full and profitable pages or parts.

1. Their Necessity; *Ye have neede that one teach you againe.*

2. What they were necessitated to know: *Which bee the first principles of the Oracles of God.* Method and brevity enforce me (for the present) to forbeare the latter, and to fall onely upon the former, which is their necesfity; *Ye have neede that one teach you againe.* Wherein we may observe foure sections or columns.

1. The parties to be taught; ὑμᾶς, *ye, you*, that is, the beleeving Hebrewes, unto whom (in particular) this Epistle was directed.

χρείαν ἔχετε. 2. Their want, χρεία need, *ye have need.*

3. That whereof they stood in neede, τὸ διδάσκειν,

διδάσκειν, to be taught, *that one teach you.*

4. Their decreaſe in knowledge, πάλιν, *againe, Ye have need that one teach you againe.*

Of each which in their order, and firſt of the parties ὑμᾶς, *ye, you*; the Hebrewes, a people noble in their Pedegree, honorable in their titles, eminent in their Prærogative, exceeding in their Priviledges. 1. *Of the parties the Hebrewes.*

1. Noble in their Pedegree, being a Nation too exceſsively curious in their Genealogies, and able to derive their Linage punctually from the firſt of men, their Originall taking its riſe almoſt with time it ſelfe, beginning in our great Grandparents *Adam*, and *Eve*, and continued by the warrant of Canonicall ſcripture, (in the nine firſt chapters of 1 *Chron.* and *Luke* the 3. from the 23 verſe, unto the end of the chapter) unto the birth of him, who is the joy of the whole earth, *Jeſus Chriſt* our Saviour, by whom they had the greateſt, higheſt, and moſt peculiar, outward nobility, that ever did or could befall them. 1. *Noble in their Pedegree.*

2. Honourable in their titles, called *Hebrews* from *Eber* ſon of *Salah* *Noahs* great grandchild, *Gen.* 11 14. which by them who underſtand that language is tranſlated *Paſſage*, or *Paſsing*. *Paſſage* in a paſsive ſignification, they being an intermedium in the conveyance of grace, betwixt God and other people, they receiving (if I may ſo ſpeak) all Gods ordinances at the firſt hand, which were by them delivered unto all other Nations at the ſecond hand. *Paſsing* in an Active ſignification, they being more near unto God, in their ſervices then other people, and therefore ſurpaſsing them, 2. *Honorable in their Titles*

in the truth and purity of a religious worſhip, of the true pure and eternall God. They be likewiſe called Iſraelites, from Iſrael, a name given unto *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 28. (which ſignifieth *Prince of God*, or *Conquerer of God*) who was a chiefe Patriarch of theſe people, which did prævail with God, in all their ſervices. viz. *Prayers*, *Sacrifices &c.* And therefore they be uſually called the *children of Iſrael*, as *Deut.* 33. 1. and frequently the *People of Iſrael*, and St. *Peter* ſeemes to labour to inſinuate himſelfe into them, in this appellation, *yee men of Iſrael*, *Act.* 2. 22. Theſe were a people, of whome it was moſt properly ſaid: *ye are a choſen generation, a royall Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar*, or (as our laſt tranſlation hath it in the margent,) a purchaſed people. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. They be likewiſe called *Jewes* from *Judah*, Iacobs fourth ſon, *Gen.* 29 35. which ſignifieth *Praiſe*, they being the praiſe of God, and the glory of the whole earth; they have titles far greater then theſe, termes of a nearer relation to the Deity, as his *peculiar treaſure*, *Exod:* 19. 5. *The people of the Lord*, *Dev:* 27. 9. *The children of the Lord*, *Deut.* 14. 1. *His firſt born*, *Exod:* 4. 22. *His Inheritance*, 1 *Kings* 8. 51. *The lot of his Inheritance*, *Jer.* 10. 16. *which titles be neither bare nor barren, but fruitfull, profitable and pleaſant, for they were his Vineyard*, *Pſal.* 80. 15. *Iſa.* 5. 1. *Mat.* 21. 33.

3. *Eminent in their Prerogative.* *Deut.* 10. 15 & 14. 2.

Thirdly, *eminent in their prærogative*: God choſe them to be a ſpeciall people unto himſelfe, above all people that were upon the face of the earth, Deut. 7. 6. *To make them high*

high, above all nations which he hath made, in praiſe, and in name, and in honour. Deut. 26. 19. Therefore was hee more nigh unto them then any Nation. Deut. 4. 7. They received his word before any Nation. Pſal. 147. 19, 20. In Judah (that is, the countrey of the Jewes) *is God known: his name is great in Iſrael,* (that was the name of the ten Tribes.) *In Salem* (that is, *Jeruſalem*, the chiefe city of the Jewes) *alſo is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion,* (the name of the hill whereon the Temple ſtood) *Pſal. 76. 1, 2. And thou* (that is, mount *Sion* or *Jeruſalem*) *art more glorious and more excellent, then the mountaines of prey*, that is, then other Nations which lived by Tyrranny, Robberie, Rapine, and cruelty, from them is Salvation, *Ioh. 4. 22.* and unto them onely did Chriſt preach in the fleſh, *Mat. 15. 24.* denominating them children, the Gentiles dogges, v. 26. Therefore he would not permit his Twelve Diſciples, to preach the glad tidings of the Goſpell of peace to the Gentiles, nor to any City of the Samaritans, *Mat. 10. 5, * 6.* before they had at the leaſt heard of the ſame beginning at Jeruſalem, *Lu. 24. 47.* which concludes that as the Elect are ſaid to be a kinde of the firſt fruites of the creatures, *Iam. 1. 18.* ſo the Iewes may be ſaid to be a kinde of firſt fruits of the Elect, and therefore are they called *primi Eccleſiæ*, the firſt men of the Church; and *St. Auguſtine* calls them *Primores Eccleſiæ*, the chiefe men of the Church; which excellency, and præcedency, belongs unto them by right of Covenant, which was firſt made with them and their ſeed, *Act. 2. 39.* Fourthly,

Ainſworth upon that place.

* *v. 6 By Iſrael is to be underſtood Iudah, the Iewes being Iſraelites,* κατ' ἐξοχὴν *by way of excellency.*

4. *Exceeding in their Priviledges.*

Fourthly, *Exceeding in their Priviledges*, the Lord in an extraordinary manner acknowledgeth himselfe to be the *God of the Hebrewes*, *Exod.* 3.18. *and* promised upon their obedience *to set them on high above all Nations of the earth, attending them with all blessings. Deut.* 28.1.2. and *Lev.* 26.3.4. *&c. and to make them a kingdome of Priests, and a holy Nation, Exod.* 19.5.6. unto them hee did *commit his oracles, Rom.* 3.2. but of all this was the greatest priviledge, that they injoyed the honour of our Saviours birth, and the first proffer of him: amongst eight severall Priviledges, S. *Paul* ends in this as the chiefest, thus extolling them; *who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, & the glory, and the covenants* (or as the margent of our last translation, *testaments*) *& the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Rom.* 9, 4, 5. And when the same Apostle goes about to make good the authority of his Apostleship, & to defend it from reproach, he useth his Priviledges which belonged to him as he was a Iew, as the strongest arguments to defend the same: *Are they Hebrewes? so am I: are they Israelites? so am I: are they of the seed of Abraham? so am I.* 2 *Cor.* 11. 22. accounting them as the greatest carnall blessings, which belong unto men. *Phil.* 3.5,6. all which Priviledges belonged unto them as they were *Iewes*, and were by them enjoyed as they were under the covenant: Whereunto may be added, that these *Hebrews* had greater Priviledges then these, in being Christians, for they

they were *holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, chap.* 3. 1. of whom the Author of this Epiſtle was perſwaded things that accompany ſalvatiõ, becauſe of their work & labour of love, *which they had ſhewed towards the name of Chriſt in miniſtring to the Saints, chap.* 6. 9. 10. Nevertheleſſe here wee ſee, they ſtand in need to be taught againe, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God. Whence we may learn; that, *There is neither Covenant, nor Promiſe, (though God beare a part therein) Claim, nor Title, Priviledge, nor Prærogative, Love nor Devotion, ſufficient in the wayes of ſalvation, without a methodicall, continuall, and profitable proceeding in the knowledge of Chriſt and his word.* For theſe *Hebrewes*, though they were every way thus compleatly qualified, yet neglecting time and method, they were *dull of hearing*, not able to receive, what was to be delivered concerning Chriſt: and babes fit onely for milk, and not for ſtrong meat; ſtanding in need to be taught again, *which be the firſt Principles of the oracles of God*: which brings mee from the firſt part of the text the *Hebrewes*, which were the *parties*, unto the ſecond which is their *want*; *yee have need.*

Doct. 2.

Reaſons.

The Parties want is the 2d. column or ſection, in their neceſſity: χρέια need; yee have need, which word in this phraſe χρείαν ἔχετε hath ſeverall acceptions, ſignifying ſometimes *neceſſity*, *Mat.* 14. 16. *they need not depart*, that is, there is no neceſſity of their departure; therefore *Beza* tranſlates my text, *neceſſe habetis*. yee have *one thing* neceſſary; yee have a neceſsity that one teach you again: Secondly, it is ſometimes taken for *Indigence* or *want*, *Eph.* 4. 28. *to give to him that needeth*; that is, to him that

2. *The Parties wants.*

ἃ χρείαν ἔχουσιν.

τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι.

πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας pro πρὸς χρείαν οἰκοδομῆς. per Hypallagen.

that is in want, therefore the vulgar translation reads it *in ligetis*; *yee want* or *are in want:* Thirdly it is translated *Use. Eph.* 4.29. which is good to the *use of edifying*, that is, which is usefull to edifying; whereupon *Erasmus* reads it *opus habetis* yee have use, or *it is usefull that one teach you again*. In all our English translations which I have met with, it is *need*, a word æquivalent unto all these severall acceptions, and if wee take it in any or all these senses, it makes for our good: and first, in the first, if it be taken for *necessary* or *necessity*; the thing that these *Hebrewes* were, and wee are to be taught, being the scriptures here called the *oracles* of *God*; for the word of God *is a lamp* or *candle* unto the feet of every beleever, *Psal.* 119. 105. *whereunto wee are to give heed, as unto a light that shineth in a darke place*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. The scripture is both a light of instruction, to teach us our way: and of direction, to guide us therein. *The law* (or doctrine) of the *Lord is perfect, converting,* (or restoring) the soul; *the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. Psal.* 19. 7. *Therefore is it necessary that we be taught again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God*. In the second sense wee are in want of this Doctrin or teaching: *for naturally we have our understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindenesse of our hearts. Eph.* 4. 18. *And the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which beleeve not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. Whosoever is a beleever, if hee do not labour after Faith, Virtue, Knowledge,

Willet Syn. op. p.40.

Tem-

Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, Brotherly kindeneſs, and Charity, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5, 6, 7. *he is blind & cannot ſee afar off, and hath forgotten that hee was purged from his old ſins.* *v.* 9. *And therefore is in want that one teach* him *again which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God.* Thirdly, it may bee profitable unto us as it denotates *uſe*, when wee conſider the end whereunto every man ought to tend, whether it be externall, the glory of God, which is happineſſe infinite and eternall; or internall, the ſalvation of our ſouls, which is life everlaſting: if it be that former, all enterpriſes, our eating and drinking, and whatſoever wee do ought to aime thereat. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. And that our lives may conduce unto the glory and praiſe of God, wee muſt be filled with the fruits of righteouſneſſe, whereunto love in an increaſe of knowledge, judgement, & ſincerity is requiſite. *Phil.* 19, 10, 11. Which life will be a true praiſe of him, who is glorified thereby, *Pſal.* 50. 23. Who expects praiſe with underſtanding, *Pſal.* 47. 7. which underſtanding is attained by the holy ſcriptures through Faith. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. Or if it be this latter which is internall, our ſalvation, that is life eternall, wee muſt receive the ſame by *Chriſt Jeſus*, who is the giver thereof, *Iohn.* 10. 28. and the way thereunto, *Ioh.* 14. 6. whom to know is eternall life, *Ioh.* 17. 3. and is taught in the ſcriptures, *Ioh.* 5. 39. In this ſenſe therefore yee have uſe, or it is *uſefull that one teach you again which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God.* Beſides, Gods word is the joy of his Servants, *Ier.* 15. 16. and their ſafety in affliction, *Pſa.* 119. 92. it is unto them moſt pleaſant, and nouriſhing food,

food and inriching wealth, *Pſal.* 19. 10. *better then thouſands of gold and ſilver, Pſal.* 119. 72. and 127. ſweeter then honey, *v.* 103. all the elect be right branches of the true Vine, whoſe meat and drink it is, to do the will of his Father that ſent him, *Ioh.* 4. 34. they take a delight to do his will: *his law is within their heart, Pſal.* 40. 8. Thus collecting what hath been ſaid in *this part*, wee may ſafely conclude; that, *A right knowledge in the word of God is ſo requiſite in Chriſtians, that though they be commendable for religion, yet it is a neceſſary, releeving, uſefull and delightfull matter, to be taught which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God.* For theſe *Hebrewes* were a people commended by the Apoſtle for their love, labour, devotion, and religion, yet ſo ſhallow in the knowledge of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, that they ſtand *in need to bee taught againe* the *firſt principles* of this religion, which directs me from their *want*, unto the matter thereof, *teaching*. *Yee have need that one teach you againe which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God.*

Doct. 3.

Reaſons.

3 *Whereof they ſtood in neede.*

The third *column* or *ſection*, of the firſt part or page of my text, is that whereof theſe *Hebrewes* ſtood in need, and that is τῦ διδάσκειν to be taught, *that one teach you*: teach? what is there to bee taught? *which be the firſt principles of the Oracles of God.* The word in the Greeke here tranſlated oracles, properly ſignifieth, *eloquent words*, but uſually, divine anſwers, and here both in the former and the latter ſenſe, muſt needs ſignifie the written word of God, which is the Canonical ſcripture, then which none is more eloquent, more Divine, nor more anſwering our doubts and demands, the ſum and end of which ſacred ſcripture, is *Jeſus Chriſt*

Chriſt our Saviour, of whom the Apoſtle had many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered, not becauſe they are difficult or abſtruſe in themſelves, but becauſe they to whom they were directed, were dull of hearing, *v.* 11. and therefore in their learning the doctrine of Chriſtianity, they muſt firſt be taught, *which be the firſt principles of theſe oracles of God.* Which may ſeeme moſt ſtrange unto them who underſtand the ſtate & condition, wherein theſe *Hebrewes* were at that time, when this Epiſtle was writ unto them: who might to the leaſt ſcruple, concerning their knowledge of their Saviour, have anſwered in the words of their forefathers, the men of *Judah* in another caſe, unto the men of *Iſrael* concerning his type *David*, our high Prieſt, *the King is neere of kin to us*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 42. was not he borne in *Bethlehem of Judah?* hath not he been converſant with us? hath not he walked in our ſtreets? preached in our Temple? taught in our Synagogues? hath not hee wrought many miracles amongſt us? is it not hee that hath cauſed our lame to walke? our blinde to ſee? and our poore to receive the Goſpel? was not hee crucified before our eyes? is not his Sepulchre with us? did not he forty dayes after his reſurrection, deprive us of his bodily præſence, by his Aſcenſion up into Heaven, from the Mount of *Olivet*, by his owne power, *where he ſitteth, at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and ſhall come from thence, to judge the quick and the dead?* Did not his doctrine aſtoniſh his auditory, and cauſe us to confeſs his ſuppoſed father, his mother, and kindred to live amongſt us? *Mar.* 6. 2, 3. How ſhould we be ignorant of him? that we ſhould be thus ignorant, is both ſtrange and improbable: did not our *Proprià virtute.*

coun-

country man, and Apoſtle *Peter*, in one Sermon
Acts 2. 41. wherein this our Saviour was taught us, convert three thouſand of our ſoules in one day, bringing us all therewith, into ſuch amazement, and aſtoniſhment, that we being pricked at the heart, with a ſenſe of our ſinnes, cryed out unto him and his
verſe 37. fellow Apoſtles, *men and brethren, what ſhall wee doe?* whereupon we received the Sacraments, which are ſignes and ſeales of our profeſſion of the Do-
verſe 42. ctrine of Chriſtianity; we continuing *in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*; Can there be any fuller or clearer demonſtration of our ſecurity and knowledge through a true faith in Chriſt? and bee not theſe the firſt principles of this faith? How is it thē that we are thus upbraided that *wee ſtand in need to be taught againe, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God.* This opinion of us muſt needs be too prejudicate and injurious. To which it is replied. The Apoſtle doth grant, they had ſome ſmattering in the knowledge of Chriſt, for they were babes, that is, they ſtood in neede to bee inſtructed in the firſt grounds and rudiments of Chriſtian religion, for their ſenſes were not ſo exerciſed therein, that they were able to diſcerne good and evill. *v.* 14. therefore they ſtood in neede of a ſtrengthening, confirming, and increaſing of their underſtanding, that they might conceive fully and aright, what that is which the Apoſtle was about to deliver concerning our Saviour: and though it may bee granted that the *Hebrewes* had ſo much knowledge, as is claime is laid unto, there is more requiſite to deſerve the name of knowing Chriſtians, as to be able to give account of the propheſies of the old Teſtament fulfilled in the new,

by

by Chriſt who is the ſubject of both: and how hee is King over his Church: Prieſt to his Elect: and Propher to his people: how by him the typicall Prieſthood is abrogated, and the ceremoniall Law taken away, in all which the Apoſtle is very exact in this Epiſtle, all which in this part conſidered together, make thus much, that, *A good improvement of the beſt meanes of ſaving knowledge, without a right and profitable uſe, & proceeding therein, comes farre ſhort of a Chriſtian duty.* *Doct. 4.*

For theſe *Hebrews* though they were auditors & ſpectators of the ſaving words and workes, of our Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, and his bleſſed Apoſtles, which was abſolutely the beſt meanes that ever Chriſtians lived under, and they commended proficients therein, as hath beene ſufficiently ſhewed, yet they were far ſhort of their duty, *For when for the time they ought to be teachers, they had need that one teach them again, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God:* being *babes which are unskilfull in the words of righteouſneſſe, and have need of milke, and not of ſtrong meate.* Wherein it is very remarkable, that *they were to be taught againe;* which leades me from that whereof they ſtood in need, which was to be taught, unto their decreaſe in knowledg expreſſed in this Adverb *Again.* *Reaſons.*

The fourth and laſt particular of this their *neceſſity* is their decreaſe in knowledge, in this word *πάλιν again*, which here is the laſt and greateſt aggravation of their ignorance, if we conſider Gods dealing with them, and their negligence in a right uſe of his inconceivable mercies and favours, which he had ſo freely and plentifully beſtowed upon them. If we conſider Gods dealing with them, he was very precife, in the obſervance of their Prerogative. For as at the promulgation of the Law in the old Teſtament, he made choiſe of them before any other Nation, ſo in the new Teſtament at the 4 *Their decreaſe in knowledge.*

firſt preaching of the Goſpell, he preferred them before all other people, *Luke* 24. 47. and more then this, God having raiſed up his Son, ſent him to *bleſſe them firſt, in turning them from their iniquities*, Acts 3. 26. And herein is their prerogative much extended, that our Saviour made choiſe of *Jewes* and *Hebrewes* to bee his 12. Apoſtles, for the firſt & principall adminiſtration of his Goſpell: and as God was preciſe in the obſervance of their Prerogative, ſo likewiſe he was ſtrict in giving a reſpect unto their Priviledges; our Saviour told the woman of Canaan, *it is not meet to take the childrens bread and to caſt it unto dogges*, Matth. 15. 26. and thoſe which were ſcattered abroad, upon the perſecution that aroſe about *Stephen*, preached the word to none but the *Jewes* only, untill they came to *Antioch*, Acts 11. 19, 20. *To the children of the ſtocke of* Abraham *was the word of ſalvation ſent*, Acts 13. 26. all which tranſcendent bleſſings (wherewith God had ennobled them) we ſee they ſlighted & neglected; which mightily aggravates not only their non-proficiency, but their decreaſe in the knowledge of true Religion, by neglecting a right uſe of that extraordinary meanes of ſalvation, which God had beſtowed upon them: for whereas *for the time they ought to be teachers*, they had need *yet to be taught*, and that *againe, which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God*, and though the firſt preaching of the word of God, was neceſsary for them not only in reſpect unto their Priviledges & Prerogative, but alſo in a relation unto Gods promiſe made unto them, the performance whereof was neceſsary for their ſalvation, *Acts* 13. 46. they were not yet able to receive ſtrong meate, but were ſtill babes fit onely for milke. Moreover they were men of a large capacity in the knowledge of the law, which was the *miniſtration of death*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. and the *miniſtration of condemnation*

nation, verſ. 9. herein (which was but the Covenant of the Law.) *They knew the will of God, and approved the things that were more excellent* (or, as our laſt margent varies it, tried the things that differ) *being inſtructed out of the law, and were confident that they themſelves were guides of the blind, a light of them which are in darkneſſe, inſtructers of the fooliſh, teachers of babes, which had the forme of knowledge and of trueth in the Law*, Rom. 2. 18, 19, 20. But in the underſtanding of the doctrine of Chriſtianity, which is the Covenant of the Goſpell, they were babes and dull of hearing, which much aggravates their ignorance and negligence; but this makes them more inexcuſable, (to be within the covenant of grace: (for the Author of this Epiſtle was perſwaded of their ſalvation, *cha.* 6. 9, 10.) and to forget the words of reconciliation and eternall life, after they had received the ſame from the Lord of life in perſon, and his Apoſtles, who were eye-witneſſes of the ſame, *chap.* 2. 3. 4. and had entertained a confidence therein, that they ſtand in need *to be taught againe, the firſt principles of the oracles of God*: This condition of theirs may teach us thus much, that, *Chriſtians endued with greateſt Priviledges, and largeſt capacities, ſeconded with ſaving grace, without a heedful care, and paines taken in their attained knowledge of the oracles of God, cannot be exempted from a loſſe therein.* For theſe *Hebrews*, though they had all priviledges, and were capable of the greateſt bleſſings, as they were of the promiſed ſeed, and under the Covenant of grace, of whom the Apoſtle was perſwaded, things which accompany ſalvation, yet not being (as was requiſite) carefull and painefull in the meanes of their attained ſaving knowledge, they were fallen into a loſs therein, ſtanding in need to be taught againe, what formerly they had learned: therfore the Apoſtle is im-

Doct. 5.

Reaſons.

partiall with them, nor soothing nor clawing them, in their condition, but laying open their wants. *Yee have need that one teach you againe; when for the time yee ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God:* all which noted in such noble, honourable, knowing, and gracious Christians as these *Hebrews* were, may teach us thus much: that, *There is neither Nobility nor honour, knowledge nor vertue, sufficient to with-hold a Minister from telling his people of their sad and dangerous condition.* For these *Hebrewes*, as hath been sufficiently declared, were all these, yet the Author of this Epistle reproves them of their negligence, ignorance, and weakenesse, *For when for the time, &c.*

Doct. 6.

Reasons.

Thus I have in a briefe and cursory manner, collected something from each particular in the former part of my Text; the *Hebrews Christian necessity* in their right knowledge of the word of God, from these words, *ye have need that one teach you againe*; wherein it may be expected, that having thus followed the usuall popular way, I should have made Use and Application, of each Doctrinall observation, in order as they have been collected, which I hope Candid Readers wil be pleased to excuse, because brevity hath inforced a forbearance thereof, I trusting (as I pray God they may,) that all heedfull and industrious Christians which shall reade this discourse, will of themselves make more profitable use and application of all divine practicall lessons, for their owne spirituall good and profit, then usually may by man be administred: but that herein I may somewhat commodiously answer your expectation, note that in this discourse of these beleeving *Hebrewes*, wee may observe their slight attendance of Christ in his ordinance, and in their profession of him; their neglect of their Priviledge, Prerogative, Love and Devotion, by an immethodicall, unsucceſſefull, and unprofita-

unprofitable progreſſe in their knowledge of *Chriſt* & his Word; their want of a neceſsary reliefe, uſe, and delight in the Word of God; their neglect of their duty in not profiting by a commendable improvement of the beſt meanes of ſalvation that ever people enjoyed, and all theſe aggravated with loſs and decay in Religion, and laid open, check't and reproved by an Apoſtolical chiding, are (more then ſignes) convincing arguments of their deficiency, and imperfection in true Religion and Chriſtianity, and in a ſaving knowledge of God and his Sonne Chriſt Jeſus, as they bee taught in the written word. And if it was thus with ſuch Noble, Priviledged, covenanted, able, and capable Chriſtians, as theſe Hebrews were, then is it ſo much more now with all other Beleevers; a conſideration and ſurvey whereof may prompt and ſuggeſt much ſoveraign and wholſome direction unto all that profeſs Chriſtian Religion. Firſt, *Hearers*, ſecondly, *Teachers*.

Firſt *Direction unto Hearers*. It being thus that theſe *Hebrewes* were Beleevers, and a people of the promiſed ſeed, under both Covenants, endued with greater Priviledges, Prerogatives, and relations unto God, and his Sonne Chriſt Jeſus, then any other Nation, they having not only received the Goſpell, but made ſome Proficiency therein, and were endued with ſuch graces as promiſe ſalvation: yet for all this that they were at a loſs in ſaving knowledge, which brought them unto ſuch dulneſs of hearing (that is, underſtanding) that they were unprofitable hearers, not able to underſtand what was requiſite to be known concerning Chriſt, but were babes and weakelings therein, ſtanding in want, neceſſity, and need of reliefe, light, uſe, joy and comfort, of the true and ſaving ſpirit taught & directed in the ſacred word of God, by a methodicall, orderly, & profitable receiving the words of reconcilia- *Uſe* 1.

tion, which is moſt remarkable in them, becauſe they lived under a more able and ſufficient miniſtery of the Goſpell, and means of ſaving knowledge and underſtanding, then any age either before or ſince ever afforded, for it was firſt ſpoken unto them by the *Lord himſelfe, and after was confirmed by them which heard him*, chap. 2 verſe 3. whom the Evangeliſt Saint *Luke* calleth eye-witneſſes, *Luke* 1. 2. An Epithet proper only in this ſenſe unto the Apoſtles, wherewith the Apoſtle *Peter* confirmes his Authority, in the delivery of this Doctrine, 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. and Saint *John* the Apoſtle deſirous to put the firſt promulgation of the Doctrine of Chriſt (whereof theſe *Hebrewes* were partakers) beyond all exception, and oppoſition, guards the trueth with the Apoſtles, hearing, ſeeing, and handling thereof, 1 *John* 11. Therefore the Author of this Epiſtle gives theſe *Hebrewes* a particular & ſpeciall charge, to be obedient unto theſe their Miniſters. *Obey them that have rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves: for they watch for your ſoules, as they that muſt give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with griefe: for that is unprofitable for you*, Heb. 13. 17. Nevertheleſſe, here it is apparent, neither the authority nor ability, nor the power nor care of theſe their extraordinary Miniſters, nor other rareſt helps could keepe them in a right *Decorum*, in their knowledge of Chriſt, and the Scriptures, *For they were in need to bee taught againe, which be the firſt Principles of the oracles of God*, being babes, whoſe ſenſes were unexperienced in diſcerning good and evill, and unskilfull in the words of righteouſneſſe, which made them dull of hearing, that is, underſtanding, many things concerning Chriſt, and capable only of milke, that is, the firſt principles and rudiments of the Doctrine of Chriſt, *viz.* concerning *Repentance, Faith,*

Faith, *Baptiſme*, *laying on of hands*, *Reſurrection of the dead*, *Judgement*, Chap. 6. 1, 2. The apprehenſion whereof in theſe honourable beleevers, may teach all Chriſtians by their neglect to take warning, and to be wary and circumſpect, leſt they fall into the like relapſe; for if it was thus with the *Hebrewes* who were the naturall Olive: how much more may it be ſo with us *Gentiles*, *who be the wilde olive graffed in, cut out of the Olive-tree, which is wilde by nature: and graffed contrary to nature into a good Olive-tree*, Rom. 11. 24. The Jewes they were naturall branches, which for unbeleeſe were cut off, that wee might be graffed in, verſe 19. therefore we ought not to be high minded, preſuming neither of our title unto happineſſe, for theirs was far nearer, they being under both Covenants, we but only under the Covenant of grace: neither of our knowledge, theirs was farre greater, and more experimentall then ours can be: neither of our graces, for they were holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, *chap.* 3. 1. neither of workes, for they had done a worke, a labour of love, which they ſhewed towards the name of Chriſt, by perſeverance in miniſtring to the Saints, *chap.* 6. 10. Therefore if God would not ſpare, nor paſſe by their neglect of the right uſe of the meanes of ſaving knowledge, how ſhall hee ſpare it in us? for if he would not ſpare unbeleeving Jewes, neither will he ſpare unbeleeving Gentiles, *Rom.* 11. 21. And if negligence, ignorance, and weakeneſſe in knowledge of Chriſt and his word, was not winkt at, nor ſmothered in theſe believing *Hebrews*, neither will it be paſt by in beleeving *Gentiles*: which ought to reach us all circumſpection, humility, and feare in our walking here, *Epheſ.* 5. 15, 16. *Rom.* 11. 20. ever taking a continuall care rightly to examine our eſtates (in reſpect to God and man, repentance,

faith

faith and obedience) by the preſcript rule of Gods word, which is ever the minde of the holy Ghoſt, ever having likewiſe a ſure and ſpeciall care, leſt we follow weake and blinde, ſecure and careleſſe guides; men who undertake to be Miniſters, and preachers of Gods Word, without either calling or abilities, for the execution thereof: *who deſiring to be teachers of the law, underſtand not what they ſay, nor whereof they affirme*, 1 Tim. 1. 7. *Whoſe words will eate as doth a canker*, 2 Tim. 2. 17. *Of which ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the trueth*, * 2 Tim. 3. 6,7,8,9.

* *I wiſh that all Chriſtians (eſpecially in theſe diſtracted times) wruld often very ſeriouſly reade over the whole Chapter.*

Poſtſcript.

READER, for the preſent I am inforced not to exceed this ſheet & half, wherein I have propoſed a ſecond uſe of the Saints Imperfection, therein ſhewing the greatneſſe of the Miniſters great charge, weighty calling, & excellency of abilities requiſite for the function; with an anſwer unto all thoſe arguments which I have met with, wherewith Intruders into the miniſtery, ſeeme to maintaine their intruſion; therefore I purpoſe (God willing) hereafter to ſalute thee with that, if thou accept kindly of this.

FINIS.

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